6510.

AN

EXHORTATION *to the Loyal* PROTESTANTS *of* GREAT-BRITAIN, *to maintain a good Understanding among themselves, and live in* Love *and* Unity, *as they prize their present Prosperity or future Happiness.*

A

SERMON,

Preach'd at

PRINCE'S RISBOROUGH,

IN THE

County of *BUCKS*:

ON

Friday the 11th. of *November*, 1715.

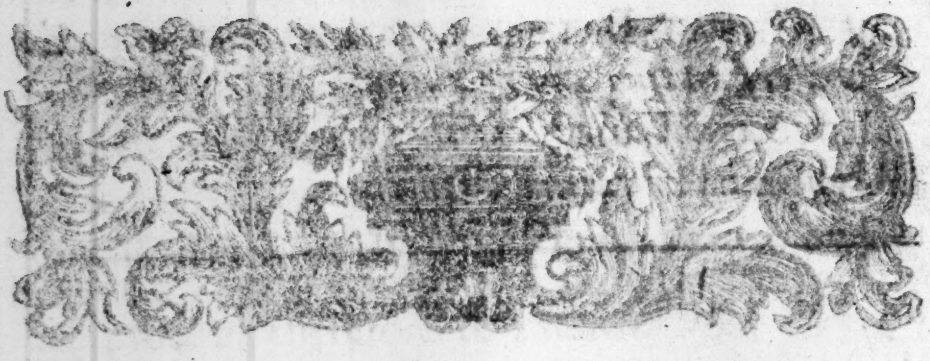
By THOMAS FOSTER.

MATT. xxi. 25.

—*Every Kingdom divided against it self, is brought to Desolation: and every City or House divided against it self, shall not stand.*

LONDON:

Printed and Sold by *Jos. Marshal*, at the *Bible* in *Newgate-street*, and *J. Roberts* in *Warwick-Lane*. 1715.



BRITISH MUSEUM

JOHN XIII. 35.

By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another.

THE Societies of different Denominations among the *Jews*, diſtinguiſh'd themſelves from one another by their Cuſtoms, Habits, or Opinions: The *Phariſees* wore long *Garments*, and enlarged the Borders of their Phylacteries with Scrouls of Parchment, profeſſing the Belief of *Angels*, and the *Reſurrection of the Body*. The *Sadducees* were known by denying this, and oppoſing the *Phariſees* in their Ways and Cuſtoms. The *Scribes* were remarkable for their ſtrict and extraordinary *Zeal* for the Written *Word of God*, which the *Phariſees* regarded not ſo much as their own Traditions. And the *Diſciples* of *John the Baptiſt* were generally known by their ſevere and abſtemious Way of Living. But thoſe of the Bleſſed JESUS, the *Prince of Peace*, are to be diſtinguiſh'd by their ardent Affection to *one another*. *By this ſhall all Men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one to another.*

I BEG Leave, in Diſcourſing on theſe *Words*, to omit ſome Things which might be ſaid to evince that *Love* is the *diſcriminating Badge and Token* by which the *Diſciples* of Chriſt are known. I am not directing my Diſcourſe to *Jews* or *Infidels*, but *Chriſtians*, who believe the Divinity of Chriſt, and are acquainted with the Scriptures; ſo that Words need not be multiplied to prove a *Thing* which our Lord ſo plainly aſſerts. I ſhall proceed therefore to improve your Time, and employ your Thoughts in this Manner.

I. TO conſider the *Nature* of this *Love*, which is the Mark by which the *Diſciples* of Chriſt are *known*.

II. TO ſhew the *Neceſſity* thereof, in Order both to our *preſent* and *future* Happineſs.

III. TO enforce the *Duty of reciprocal Love* by ſome Motives.

IV. AND *Laſtly*, To make ſome *ſuitable Improvement* of the Whole. But,

I. TO conſider the *Nature* of this *Love*, which diſtinguiſhes the *Diſciples* of Chriſt from others.

THE good Apoſtle calls it *the Bond of Perfectneſs*, and not improperly: Becauſe we are told elſewhere, That *it is the fulfilling of the Law*. It is that *Grace* which in its Nature is preferable to, and excels all others; and indeed, from whence moſt Chriſtian *Virtues* ſpring. For where *Love* is truly ſeated in the *Heart*, it will *ſmooth* and *ſoften* our rugged Diſpoſitions; make us *ſociable* and fit for *Converſation*; of a *compaſſionate* and *ſympathizing* Temper; ready to contribute to, and promote the Happineſs of our Fellow Creatures, and rejoyce at their *Proſperity*.

Rom. xiii. 1.

To

To share with them in their *Adversity*, and bear a Part of their *Afflictions*; to *comfort* the *afflicted*, and *relieve* the *Needy*. To administer *Consolation* to desponding Christians, by applying such comfortable Portions of the Word of GOD to their *wounded Spirits*, as are suitable and proper. To strengthen our *weak* Brethren, and inform the *Ignorant*. To settle the Wavering (if possible) *who are tossed about with every Wind of Doctrine*, and establish and *build up* the Strong *on their most Holy Faith*. To love our *Enemies*; to forgive *Injuries* offer'd to us by any, and much more to forgive our *Brethren*. To do *good to them that hate us*, and much more to our Friends and Lovers, and *to all Men as we have Opportunity, but especially to the Houshold of Faith*. To extenuate each other's *Faults*, and charitably interpret each other's *Actions* to the best Advantage. "To be so far from "making *malicious Glosses* on the *innocent* Meaning of "our Fellow-Christians, from *proclaiming* their Miscarriages, or *rejoycing* at their Falls, as not to believe "Ill of them, but upon undeniable Evidence; and "when we are forced so to do, to *pity* and *lament*, and "*endeavour* to restore them, and *pray* and *hope* for their "Reformation." And in short, to do all the *Good* we can to the *Souls*, *Bodies* and *Reputation* of each other, *laying down our Lives*, if need be, for the *Brotherhood*. And *acting* with the same Candor to them and all Men, as we would have *them* to us, if they were directly in our *Condition*, and we in *theirs*. Which is the *Golden Rule* of the Gospel, and the *Nature* of that *blessed Love and Charity*, which Christians ought to have *one to another*, and *by* which *all Men shall know who are Christ's Disciples*. But I proceed

II. To shew the *Necessity* of this *Love*, in order both to our *present* and *future* Happiness. And

First,

Firſt, In order to our *preſent* Happineſs.

There is neither Eaſe nor Comfort to be found in any Society any longer than it is united and knit together in the Bonds of Love. For *in as much* as every Chriſtian Society is compos'd of a Congregation of faithful Men, or at leaſt ought to be, *brotherly Love* and Charity muſt of Neceſſity be their continual Companions, in order to their Preſervation and Perſeverance. "For as the Health of our *Natural* Bodies de- "pend upon the Harmony and Agreement of their "Parts, ſo doth the Proſperity of Social and *Politi-* "*cal* Ones; for *Love* and *Concord* is the Soul that doth "animate and unite Society." While *that continues*, every Thing is *harmonious*, *agreeable*, *pleaſant* and *delightful*; but if once the Nerves and Ligaments of *Love* are *ſtrain'd* and *broken*, farewell all Felicity! "For (as "One obſerves) tho' the Church *united is ſtrong as an* "*Army with Banners*, and her joynt Prayers and Praiſes "are formidable to her Enemies; yet when ſhe is "*divided*, ſhe is liable to be *attack'd* and moleſted on "every Side:—For Diviſions in Societies, are like *He-* "*ctical* Heats in our Bodies, which cauſe the Spirits to "grow feeble, and their Strength and Beauty to "decay."

A Society, while link'd together by a Chain of *Love*, is generally *Flouriſhing* and *Potent*; but if once divided is ſoon deſtroy'd. So true is that Saying of our Lord, *An Houſe, or a Kingdom, divided againſt itſelf, cannot ſtand.*

If *Hatred* and *Ill-Will*, once prevail in a Society, and abound where *Love* ſhould reign, the *Bleſſing* of Society is turn'd into a *Curſe*; for when it is ſplit aſunder and divided into Parts, *every One* having different *Ends* to anſwer, and *Deſigns* in view, the contrary Parties

Parties will continually *torment* and *harraſs* one another, till they are *devoured and conſumed one of another.* So, that if once *Humanity* and *Love* is abandon'd by a People, they had much better *abſcond* from each other, *withdraw* into ſolitary Woods and naked Deſarts, and Hermit-like diſperſe themſelves into diſtant *Caves* and *Cells*, than live together. *For where Envying* Jam. iii. 16. *and Strife is, there is Confuſion, and every evil Work.* So that 'tis beyond diſpute, that *Charity* is *eſſentially* neceſſary to our *preſent* Happineſs.

AND, *Secondly*, There is a *Neceſſity* of our loving each other alſo, in order to our *future* Happineſs: For except we practiſe this Duty of *Love* here, which is the Characteriſtick of a Chriſtian, we can't reaſonably ſuppoſe ourſelves proper Subjects for the Enjoyment of Heaven hereafter. For *as the Tree falls, ſo it lies.* According to the *Temper* we are in when we go out of this *World*, our Society will be in the *other.* He that lives and dies a Stranger to the Grace of *Love*, with *Fire-brands* of Diſcord in his Heart, and Coals of Contention in his Mouth, muſt expect ſuch Company as he hath made himſelf fit for, and that are moſt like him, even *ſnarling* Devils, *contentious* and *malicious* Spirits in the other World, who Serpent-like perpetually *hiſs* and *ſpit* their Venom and Poyſon at *one another.*

HEAVEN could not be a Place agreeable to the Temper of the Sons of Diſcord, if God would beſtow it on them; ſo inconſiſtent would it be with their *excelling* Diſpoſitions; for the Family of *Love*, the bleſſed and affectionate Society Above, is in every Thing ſo oppoſite and contrary to their *vile* Deſires, wicked Practices and Diſpoſitions, that the Celeſtial Habitation would be a Place of Torment to them.

BUT this is only ſuppoſing a Thing which cannot be. FOR *God*, who is *Unchangeable* and *Juſt*, cannot admit

admit a wicked *envious* Perſon into Heaven, while *ſuch*; having by an eternal Decree obliged Himſelf to the contrary. None but thoſe who *love* their *Brethren*, and are *born of God* in this World, can be *Heirs of God*, and *Joynt-Heirs with Jeſus Chriſt in Glory*. For he that *hateth his Brother*, (ſays the beloved Diſciple *John*) *is a Murderer*, and *no Murderer we know, ſhall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. So plain and certain is it, that we are not only of *Neceſſity* obliged *reciprocally* to love each other, in order to our *preſent* Happineſs and Comfort, but *future* alſo; and if ſo, what need have I, in the

1 Joh. iii. 15.

III. PLACE to *enforce* this Duty by ſome *Motives*. And,

Firſt, CONSIDER, if we mutually *affect each other as Brethren ought to do*: It is a certain Evidence not only to ourſelves, but others, that we are *born again*, and have an Intereſt with GOD in Heaven; for by this not only *we know that we have paſſed from Death to Life*: *But all Men* (as our Lord tells us in our Text) *ſhall know that we are his Diſciples, if we have Love one to another*. If, therefore, it be of any *Signification*, or will adminiſter any *Conſolation* to our Souls, to know that we are in a State of *Grace* and *Salvation*, or if the *Mark* and *Character* by which Chriſt diſtinguiſhes his *Diſciples* from the *World*, be worth our *Notice* and *Regard*, (as beyond Diſpute it is) let us *lay aſide all Guile, Malice*, and *Hypocriſy*, and *love one another* cordially, *not only in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth* alſo, 1 *John* iii. 18.

Secondly, CONSIDER, That *Love is the fulfilling of the Law; the New, and the Great Commandment of our Lord*; and *the Meſſage which we have heard from the Beginning*, is, *That we ſhould love one another*,

John

John iii. 11. Our Lord did preſs no Duty more earneſtly upon his Followers than this; nor does He only *command it* by his Word, but *commend it* by his Example; for He not only ſays in the Verſe before our Text, That *'tis his Commandment that we love one another*, but propoſes himſelf as an Example, ſaying, *As I have loved you.* If, therefore, the Commandment of our Great Lord is *worthy* of our *Regard*, or his Example of our Imitation, *Let us be Followers of him as dear Children*, who laid down his *precious* Life, to prevent our Ruin, and ſecure our Happineſs. *Who became the Propitiation for our Sins*, and *procured* the Favour of Almighty GOD, at the *rich* and *expenſive* Price of his own *Blood.* And if Chriſt has *ſo loved us, how ought we* (as his Diſciples) *to love one another?* If He preferr'd the Ranſoming of poor Sinners, his cruel Enemies, and the Saving our *precious* Souls to the ſhedding of his *more precious* Blood; Shall not we imitate his Bright Example, who, while on Earth, *went about doing Good, as he had Opportunity, unto all, but eſpecially to the Houſhold of Faith*; and by this Means copy out, and make a lively Tranſcript of the *Love of God?*

3*dly*, Remember, *How good and pleaſant* a Thing *it is for Brethren to dwell together in Unity! Pſ.* 133. How *beautiful* it makes us in the Eyes of GOD, and how *much* like Him, who *is Love* itſelf. Then let us not liken ourſelves to the Children of the *Devil*, by living in Enmity and Diſcord, and *hating* one another; but let *us follow after Charity, do all Things with Charity, and put it on*; Let us do our Endeavour to *dwell in Love, that we may dwell in God. Let us follow Peace with all Men, and be at Peace among ourſelves, and the God of Love and Peace ſhall be with us*, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. But,

Laſtly, CONSIDER, That the Exerciſe of this Vitue, "Makes our Minds *calm* and *chearful*, and put

" our Souls into an *eaſy* Poſture, and into *good* Hu-
" mour. It *preſerves* Men from many Miſchiefs and
" Inconveniences to which Enmity and Ill-will do
" perpetually *expoſe* them. It is apt to *make* Friends,
" and to *gain* Enemies. It is the *eaſieſt* of all Duties,
" and makes all other Duties *eaſy*. It is a Duty in every
" Man's Power to perform, how *ſtrait* and *indigent*
" ſoever his Fortune and Condition be. The *pooreſt*
" Man may be as charitable as a Prince; he may
" have as much Kindneſs in his Heart, though his
" Hand cannot be ſo bountiful and mu-
" nificent." He that *giveth a Cup of cold Wa-*
Matth. x. 42. *ter* to a Diſciple of the Bleſſed Jeſus, and hath, nor can have no better, ſhews as much Charity as a rich Man doth when he opens all his Stores, and ſhall be equally rewarded. The poor Widow *who* had but *two Mites*, and caſt them into the Treaſury, is ſaid to do more than all
Luke xxi. 4. the Rich, who caſt in much of their *Abundance*. But I come now in the

IV. AND *Laſt* Place, To make ſome *ſuitable* Uſe and Improvement of the Whole. And

Firſt, SINCE *Love* and *Charity*, is the Mark of Diſtinction, *by which all Men know* who are Chriſt's *Diſciples*, and ſince it is *abſolutely* neceſſary withall, *in* Order both to our *preſent* and *future* Happineſs: How carefully then ſhould Profeſſors of the Goſpel and Followers of Chriſt, endeavour to avoid Diviſions, and live in Love among themſelves, that ſo *all Men may know* that they are Chriſtians? For this Reaſon it behoves us to lay aſide private Hatred and Ill-will, and Party-Quarrels and Contentions in our *Civil* Converſation, which are too often the *fatal* Bane of *Chriſtian* Society and *good* Company.

WHEN

WHEN therefore we are mar together, let not mere Points of Speculation, no ways eſſential to Salvation, make us forget our *Character*, leaſt while we purſue the *Shadow* of Religion, we let go and loſe the *Subſtance* of it, which is *Charity*. Conſider, we are all *Children of one Father, we own one Lord*, and I preſume many of us have ſubmitted to one *Baptiſm*; and though peradventure all have not, yet *we* muſt not *quarrel*. What, though we cannot ſee all with the ſame Eyes; muſt we for that Reaſon imitate the Mother of Harlots, the Church of *Rome*, who is drunk with the Blood of Saints, and envy and beat one another's Brains out? We may as well differ becauſe our Faces are not juſt alike, or our Bodies of the ſame Size and Stature.

IF unhappily Matters are ſo wide between Chriſtians, that they cannot come together at the *Table of the Lord* without Offence to each other's Conſciences; what Reaſon is there, that they ſhould not be *ſociable* and *good-humour'd* in common Converſation, and love one another too as Brethren, Friends and Neighbours?

THOUGH we cannot *unite* in religious Affairs, and be all of one Mind; yet 'tis both the Wiſdom and Duty of us all as *Proteſtants*, to joyn Heart and Hand in the *common Cauſe*, againſt the common Diſturbers of our Peace, the *Pretender* and his *Adherents*. Thoſe who contemn and reject ſuch wholſome Counſel, ſhould conſider, how deplorable our Caſe would be, ſhould GOD, provok'd by our Sins, permit the Impoſtor's Arms to flouriſh. Then we muſt either be *Martyrs*, or *Apoſtates*; *renounce* our Religion, or ſuffer and *die for it*. For, how good ſoever the natural Temper of popiſh Bigots may be, yet doth their *fiery*, *blind* Zeal for their Religion,

thoſe *ſanguinary* Principles they imbibe from thoſe *Blood-Hounds*, the Jeſuits, and the reſt of that helliſh Crew, wholly diveſt them of Humanity, and extinguiſh all *tender* Impreſſions of Pity and Reſpect towards their Fellow-Creatures, who are out of the Pale of their *Church*. It being, according to their Opinion, not only a lawful, but a meritorious Act, to imbrue their Hands in the Blood of *Proteſtants*. It concerns us therefore to look to, and unanimouſly exert ourſelves, to ſupport the Proteſtant Religion; to ſecure our Civil Rights and Liberties, and keep out Popery; eſpecially at this time of Day, when it ſo formidably looks us in the Face, and is even at our Doors.

'Twas the laudable Practice of the warlike *Romans* to lay aſide all private Piques and Quarrels for the *Publick Good*; never to contend with one another, when a *Foreign Enemy* took up Arms againſt them. And in this they greatly ſhew'd their Wiſdom; for Nothing more lays open a People to their Enemies, or will ſo ſoon reduce them to Miſery, and bring Ruin on their Heads, as inteſtine Feuds and Jarrs. And I wiſh we may not fatally experience this when it is too late to repent of it. In the Words of the Apoſtle, Therefore, NOW *I beſeech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that there be no Diviſions among you.* And that in the common Cauſe, at leaſt, *Ye all ſpeak the ſame Thing*, and that *ye be perfectly joyn'd together in the ſame Mind, and in the ſame Judgment*, 1 Cor. i. 10. But,

Secondly, If *Love* is the Mark by which the Diſciples of Chriſt are known: Certainly then, on the other hand, Hatred, Malice, Envy, Murder, Conſpiracy, Rebellion, Diſcord and Strife; from whence comes *Confuſion* and *every evil Work*, are the Characters and Badges, by which the Diſciples of the *evil*

One

One are known: By this, ſhall all Men know we are his Diſciples, (*viz.*) the Devil's, if we hate, malign and perſecute one another.

PUBLICK Incendiaries, Rebels and Conſpirators, are Satan's Diſciples, and not Chriſt's. So, that whoever denounce the Preſent Diſturbers of GOD's *Iſrael*, The *Movers of Sedition*, and Trumpets of Rebellion, who ſet the Nation in a Flame, far from being a Communion of Saints, or *Iſraelites indeed*, do not wrong them. Nor can they juſtly upbraid them with want of Charity for ſaying ſo, and judging the *Tree according to its Fruit*. For ſuch is the Practice of Men in common, of *that Stamp*, that good Men they cannot properly be call'd; and if not good Men, I am ſure not good Chriſtians, and conſequently, true Diſciples of the Bleſſed Jeſus they cannot be. Their blaſphemous Oaths and horrid Imprecations, are plain Indications, that they are not *actuated* from Above, and their Lyes, Forgeries, and malicious Inſinuations, againſt their Lawful King and Government, that they are of their Father the Devil, who was a Lyar from the Beginning, and his Works they will do.

AND in ſhort, Their bloody Deſigns, their horrid Plots, and intended Maſſacres, thoſe *hidden Works of Darkneſs* (conceiv'd in *Hell*, and hatch'd in *Rome*) which GOD hath opportunely diſcover'd and brought to light of late, do put it beyond diſpute, that thoſe Perſons (who pretended to ſo much Loyalty in the late *Reign*, and have given ſo few *Inſtances* of any in this) are little better at bottom, than profeſs'd *Romans*, in Proteſtant Masks. If it were not ſo, Why do they renounce the Oath of *Allegiance*, Spew up that of *Abjuration*, with ſo little Concern, and ſet up for, and prefer a *popiſh* Intruder, to a *Proteſtant* Faith's Defender? A Monger of Slavery, to the *Bold* and *Brave* Aſſertor and

and Preſerver, under GOD, of *England's* Liberty? and a poor, broken, inſolvent Renegado, of *ſuppoſititious* Birth, and *uncertain* Pariſh, to a wealthy Prince, of Royal Extraction and Deſcent?

BE aſtoniſh'd, O ye Heavens, and wonder! that ever Men, call'd *Engliſh Men*, ſhould be ſo diſtracted, abſurd and fooliſh! That ever the *Britiſh Genius*, fam'd for Love of *LIBERTY*, ſhould be thus ſully'd and abus'd! Have we all forgot the Time when we went *in Jeopardy of our Lives every Hour*? I mean, the Slaviſh Reign of *James* II, the laſt King of that Name. Have neither our Fathers declared to us, nor we read, the Miſeries of thoſe Times, that ſo many *degenerate* Plants in our Day *rebel againſt the Lord, and againſt his Anointed*? loath the *heavenly Manna, luſt after the Fleſh-pots of* Egypt, *the Garlick and the Onions*, and wiſh again to be entangled in the Yoke of Bondage, from which thoſe *Great and Heroick Princes* have ſet us free, *WILLIAM the* III, of Immortal Memory, and *GEORGE*, by *the Grace of GOD, our Rightful and Lawful King and Governour.* Rather then, than be enſlav'd again, let us all unite as one Man, againſt our Enemies, and let LIFE and *ENGLISH LIBERTY*, both go together.

AS Brethren,—Proteſtant Brethren, let us adhere to, and love each other, live and die together, in the Defence of our Religion, our Laws, our King and Country, and if thus we Love one another, *reſiſting unto Blood in the common Cauſe*, "*ſtriving againſt Sin*, "*and the Man of Sin*," all Men ſhall know hereby that we are Chriſt's Diſciples. For though Chriſtians may not, in an hoſtile Manner, oppoſe their Lawful Governours, to ſecure their religious Rights; but rather ſuffer Perſecution for *Righteouſneſs* and Conſcience *Sake*; yet, it is more than lawful to oppoſe Rebels, Traytors and

and Pretenders; nay, it's the Duty, and I am ſure will be the Practice, upon Occaſion, of every fencible good Proteſtant, to draw his Sword for the *Illuſtrious Houſe of HANNOVER.* Nor can we any Ways more, or better manifeſt our Love at this CRISIS, to our King, our Country, or one another, than by This.

BUT to conclude: Since our Lord aſſures us, That all Men ſhall know who are his Diſciples by their loving one Another: I think I cannot better, wind up a Diſcourſe of this Nature than in the Words of the Apoſtle *Paul,* who thus exhorts us, *Col.* iii. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering.*

Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any: even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.

And above all theſethings, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts.

FOR, *by this ſhall all Men know that ye are* Chriſt's *Diſciples, if ye have Love one to Another.*

FINIS.

Advertiſement.

A SERMON Preach'd at *Barkhamſted* St. *Peter's*, in the County of *Hertford*, on *Jan.* 20. 17$\frac{1}{4}$, being the Day of Publick Thankſgiving for the peaceable Acceſſion of King GEORGE to the Throne of *Great-Britain*. The Fifth Edition.

The Good and Right Way; with the great Things God hath done for us. A Thankſgiving Sermon preach'd at *Cheſham*, in the County of *Bucks*; on *Monday, Auguſt* 1. 1715. being the Anniverſary of the Happy Acceſſion of King GEORGE to the Throne. The Third Edition: Both by *Thomas Foſter*.

And Sold by *Joſ. Marſhall*, at the *Bible* in *Newgate-ſtreet*.

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